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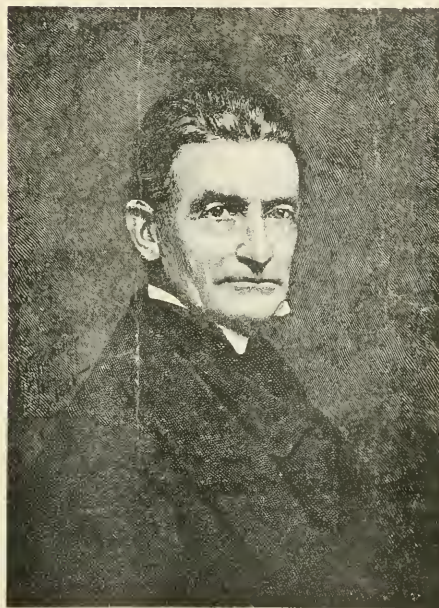
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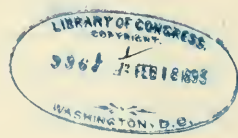
"OLD JOHN BROWN, OF HARPER'S FERRY"

A Drama in Five Acts

BY W. T. PRICE



JOHN BROWN.



CHARACTERS.

JOHN BROWN, *The Liberator*.MALVINEY, *House Servant (The "Mammy,") wife of Old Abe*.ELIZABETH, *Daughter of Mr. Washburn, the Slave-owner*.'RASTUS, *Boy, Son of Malviney and Abe*.ABE, *Negro head of the Field-hands; of the same age with his master, his playmate in boyhood*.MR. CLARKE, *Overscer*.MOSE, *A rheumatic Negro*.CHARLES, *An "Owdacious" mulatto, a master of seven-up, jig-dancing and pigeon-wings*.DICK, *A Slave, his admirer*.GIDEON, *A Giant of Despair, a Slave*.POMPEY, *A man of laughter and jollity, a Slave*.OWEN BROWN, } *Sons of John Brown.*

OLIVER BROWN, }

THE NEGRO PREACHER.

THE FIDDLER.

THE RUNAWAY SLAVE.

THE NEGRO GENTLY REPROVED, "*There is but one Master!*" *And various types at the Midnight Gathering in the woods.*

SENTINEL.

OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS IN THE FIGHT AT THE FERRY.

GABE JONES, } *Typical Citizens.*

SQUIRE PERKINS, }

CITIZENS AT THE TRIAL.

SHERIFF.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.

ATTORNEY FOR JOHN BROWN.

JUDGE.

GOVERNOR WISE.

CAPTAIN AVIS, *The Jailer*.

KAGL.

JOHN BROWN'S WIFE.

FOLLOWERS OF JOHN BROWN,

MILITARY IN UNIFORMS OF THE PERIOD, *Fife Player, Drum Major, characters typical of the day, etc.*

SYNOPSIS OF THE SCENES.

Prelude: Room at John Brown's home, at North Elba—His Dream and Vision—Parting with Wife and Child—His Mission—The whole being a living picture without words.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—Interior of Mr. Washburn's house, near Charleston, Va.; Elizabeth and the negro "Mammy" sewing for the Fall outfit; their talk; Mr. Washburn's return; 'Rastus and his redtop boots; Abe's report of the day's work; the bluster of the white overseer; his complaints; difference as to treatment; the bag of silver.

SCENE 2.—In the woods; negroes returning from work; Charles' dance; the rheumatic negro; Gideon and his grim silence; the Giant's resentment of his chains, unspoken; John Brown's wonder on coming on and accosting him at this sullen, unresponsive apparition; his equal wonder at the jollity of Pompey, who directs him to the cabin of "the most influential negro."

SCENE 3.—Interior of Abe's cabin; the great fireplace and backlog; the pone of cornbread, the middling, the oven and skillet; 'Rastus teaches his mother spelling from the Bible; "O, Mammy, you'll never learn nothin'!" Abe's return; the dance in the neighboring cabin; "Come in! Negro got no locks on his do; got nothin' to steal!" "My name is John Brown;" John Brown's talk; Abe's reluctance to entertain the idea of freedom by any other means than the Lord's will; "The Lord will do it in His own time;" "Mammy, what is freedom? what do liberty mean?" The overseer disperses the dancers in other cabin; approaches Abe's cabin; retirement of John Brown, invited to call again; violence of the overseer; strikes with his whip the first blow that Abe has ever received; Abe about to kill him with the sharp knife with which he is eating, but is restrained by his wife, who reminds him of the law and the jailer with thirty lashes; "Daddy! Daddy!" "Abe! dean' take it so hard!"

ACT II.

Wood scene, with view of the valley and mountains of Virginia, a wheatfield nearby, Mr. Washburn's house and the cabins in the distance; also the old house and the graveyard; Abe awaits his master; his appeal for the liberty that his master promised him when they were boys together; the general question discussed between them; the master's refusal to turn him adrift in his old age; alone, Abe utters a prayer; the overseer renews his quarrel; they struggle; the overseer's pistol; Abe bares his breast; "Shoot! shoot! poor wretch that I am!" the pistol brushed aside by John Brown; retirement of the overseer; "I do not know whether to thank you or not;" "I hold out to you something more than hope: freedom!" "meet me to-night at the gathering in the woods and remember the watch-word, God rules!"

ACT III.

Deep woods on the mountain side; hoots of the owl and cry of the whippoorwill heard; moon begins to rise and dispel the darkness; ground covered with fallen leaves; a wormfence back; an over-turned tree; a great rock; set trees; pines and cedars; a hillock in the centre; John Brown and his sons with pikes; the assemblage of many negroes, a number of them of distinct types; the preacher, the runaway negro with a cornknife, etc.; the passing of the patrol; Abe, Gideon, Charles, and negroes of various types of intelligence and ignorance and appearance; the distribution of pikes, to Gideon a pistol; John Brown's talk; interjections of religious character; Gideon's interruption to declare his purpose to spare not; quieted by John Brown; one negro, slipping to the feet of John Brown, chatters the word "Master!" "There is but one Master!" The song in chorus of the dispersing negroes of "Blow ye trumpets, etc., the day of jubilee is come!" Gideon and Charles left alone, Gideon tells his wrongs;

sets fire to not far distant house; John Brown's discovery and change of plans; Elizabeth, accompanied by 'Rastus, on her way to the fire, is waylaid by Gideon; Abe responds to her cry; in the struggle Gideon shoots and kills Abe; "I forgive you, Master; I got my liberty sooner than I expected!" "Daddy! Daddy!" "Father, he died for me!" "Would to God, I could repay him, my child!"

ACT IV.

The attack on Harper's Ferry; ludicrous capture of the Majah and the Squire; the death of the overseer; death of Kagi in the stream; battering down the door of the engine house; the death of John Brown's two sons; "he is too brave a man to die!"

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—The trial; talk of old citizens; the Majah and Squire have a word to say; John Brown's simple plea; rejects plea of insanity; citizen's remark that all twenty men could not have been insane; John Brown's wise and pathetic words.

SCENE 2.—In jail; the visit from Elizabeth; the old song; his farewell letter home; messages sent; refuses chance of escape; blessing Elizabeth and her lover; visit from his wife; the vision again, the slave unshackled; the love of the jailer for him; ready to die; satisfied with fate and the result of his attempt.

SCENE 3.—Before the jail door; troops; citizens making a holiday; types of countrymen; reproduction of Hovenden's picture; John Brown's blessing on 'Rastus and message to those that are to come; the assurance of liberty; "Beautiful mountains! Beautiful day! God! I thank thee for the omen! Lead on!" the wailing anthem of Melvin, Manha and Rastus, with great accompaniment by orchestra; the anthem rising higher and higher, the effect to be as strong a feature as possible; the drumbeat signals the death; the darkened stage; the thunder roll and the bolt of lightning revealing a stage entirely black; lights quickly on.

*Farewell God Bless you
Your Friend
John Brown*

Charleston Jail, Va., December 1st, 1859.

THIS is a play of truth, peace and reconciliation.
In every atom it is an American play.

There are but two phases of negro life that admit of great dramatic treatment, the phase found in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and its imitations, and that in the John Brown incident, at the darkest period of slavery, at the moment preceding the destruction of the system.

For what did a million or more of men give up their lives? Why did they march to battle with the song of John Brown on their lips? Why was a debt of billions incurred? Why the vast and yet unended outlay in pen-

sions? At bottom it was to destroy slavery. The younger generation may have a pardonable curiosity to see exactly what that slavery was, and in this play it is represented just as it was in its gracious as well as in its sterner aspects,—the reproduction of the literal truth. Every incident of negro life is touched on. It is perfect in its minuteness and realism; the negro's ignorance, superstitions, religion, fidelity, affection, servility, and yet dormant powers of self assertion, subdued by hope—his love of laughter, dancing, singing, the system of names, system of marriages, what he ate, how he dressed, how he plaited his hair, his dialect—in short, the negro as he was, and as he exists no more!

It is a drama—not a political play.

The play is written by a Southern-born man, an ex-Confederate soldier, a Kentuckian, from the State that sent the hemp with which John Brown was hanged! Written with a full knowledge of the slave, the master and John Brown, and in perfect sympathy with them all!

It is a play as well adapted to popularity in the South as in the North, and with as much vitality as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It is truer to nature than "The Octoroon" and "The White Slave,"—the three plays indicated having been the most profitable ever written, and treating of the same subject; only this is the first play that has put the negro on the stage in a serious character in numbers, as a race, unrelieved by mere romanticism. It is a novelty of a sensational character.

Old Abe is a greater character than Uncle Tom: He sacrifices his life for his mistress.

Little 'Rastus is a more natural and touching character than Topsy.

It abounds in humor without conventionality; the dances, the songs,—everything is genuine.

It is a people's play—a real play, without artifice; a realistic play, more so than "The Old Homestead" and the like, because it involves more characters and more important events, more substance. It is a kind of play to interest the entire theatre-going public and to evoke the attendance of those unaccustomed to the stage.

The pikes and many of the articles used are the original ones used by John Brown.

John Brown is a perfect tragic figure; nothing invented by any dramatist excels this type in accordance with every dramatic law,—a tragic figure that lived, acted and died. A great play is made by a great subject alone; great under the simplest treatment. John Brown has lived in the novel, in paintings, poems, orations, busts, etc., and should be a living figure on the stage.

It is not merely John Brown—for the matter in hand was larger than John Brown in a merely human sense; while the variety and picturesqueness of the characters make it a great historical picture involving many lives, emotions and figures.

The scenes of the play are picturesque beyond the ordinary—the valley of Virginia, Harper's Ferry by moonlight, the conspiracy in the deep woods by moonlight, etc.

The souvenir book that will accompany "Old John Brown," is of extraordinary interest, containing poems by Victor Hugo, Whittier, the words of Wendell Phillips, Thoreau, Henry Ward Beecher, Emerson, Horace Greely, Garibaldi, etc., a storehouse of sympathy and literature worth the reading of any true heart.

The scenes and characters depicted by pencil and in the pictorial display in an advertising way, will show at a glance that the play is full of human interest and not a mere revival of a past political discussion. Each character will thus appear. Selected for illustration will be John Brown's picture, the exterior and interior of the planter's home and also of the cabin; the Bible reading scene; "Abe! Abe! doan' take it so hard!" the appeal for freedom; "Shoot, poor wretch that I am!" Charles and his coon dog; the runaway negro; the preacher; the jolly negro; the burning houses; the attack on the Fort; a fac-simile of John Brown's letter; Hovenden's picture; the meeting in the woods; Abe's death, etc., a richness of material that will afford ample striking advertising features to attract attention. It is a theme that will engage the universal attention of newspapers, and excite discussion that must result favorably.

The design here has been merely to give an outline of the action of the play; there is infinite detail in it that is not touched on in this paper.

This is an epoch-making play, and such plays are always profitable to a degree not known to the ordinary play,—hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The play will bring a benediction to everybody connected with it, money and reputation and honor.

The question of slavery has been settled forever, and there can be no possible friction on that point. The negro as he *was* is not an unpleasant memory to the Southern people.

John Brown was hanged 36 years ago! The war is over! John Brown's heroic deed made for the peace that we have; without him we would be to-day in a state of unrest. The lesson of magnanimity, without shame to any part of our country, is involved in the sure success of "Old John Brown."

John Brown of Ossawatimie, they led him out to die;
And lo! a poor slave mother with her little child press'd nigh.
Then the bold blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild,
As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kiss'd the negro's child.
The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell apart;
And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the loving heart.
That kiss from its guilty means redeemed the good intent,
And round the grisly fighter's hair the martyr's aureole bent!

—Whittier.

"The North is as much responsible for the existence of slavery as the South."—*Abraham Lincoln at Conference at Hampton Road.*

"The Story of John Brown is one of the possessions of which mankind will never grow tired."—*Harper's Weekly.*

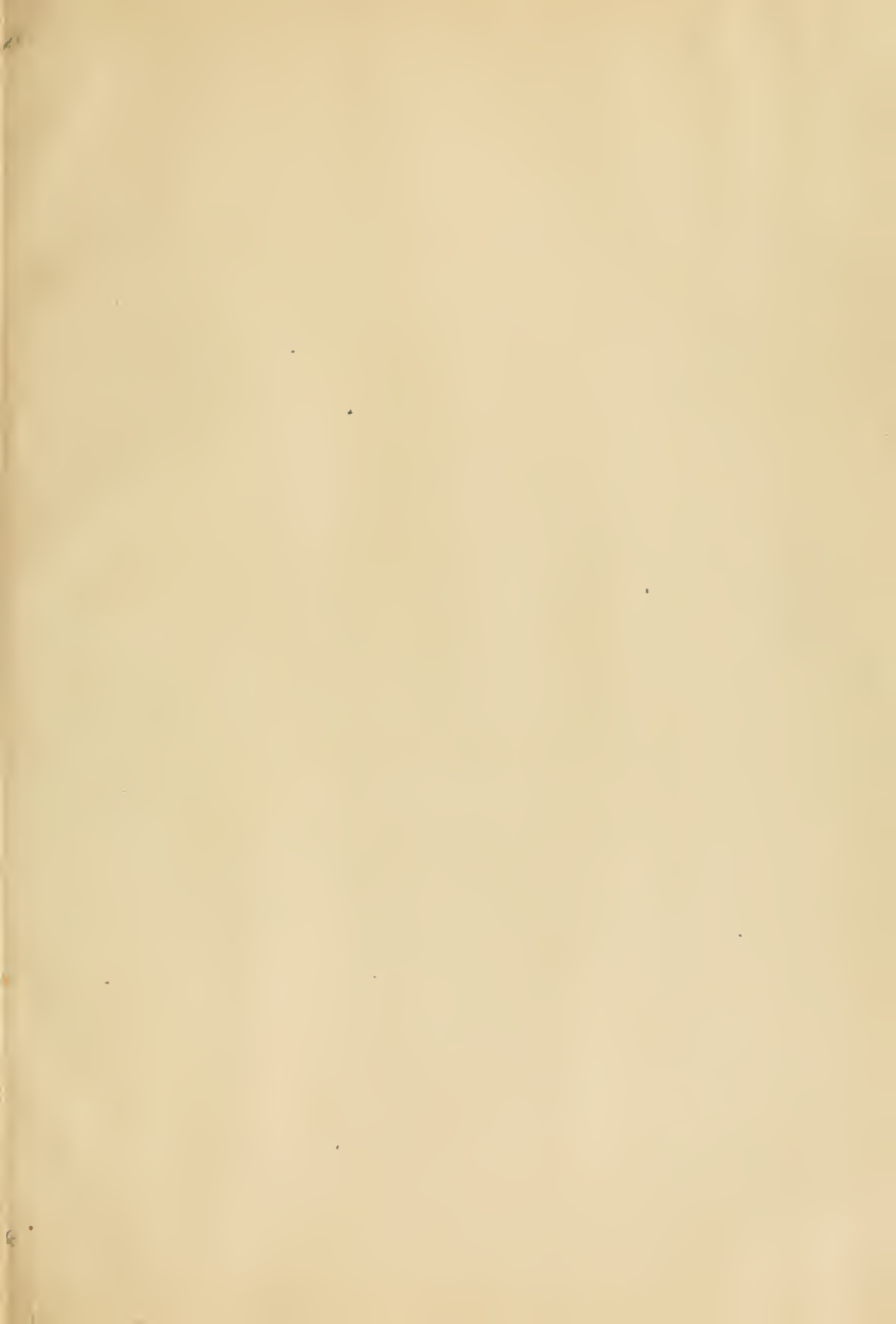
"We do not envy him who can read the story of that execution without tears."—*New York Tribune, December 11, 1880.*

Gov. Wise said: "John Brown was a great man, sir; he was a great man. Yes," he added, "John Brown was a hero; John Brown was a hero, sir!"—*Newspaper letter from Richmond, October 5, 1884.*

John Brown died that the slave might be free;
John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
But his soul is marching on.



HOVENDEN'S PAINTING OF WHITTIER'S POEM



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